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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Fifth session
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June and 1 July 2014
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda
Substantive issues: public participation in decision-making

Draft decision V/2 on public participation in decision-making

Summary

The present document sets out a draft decision on public participation in decision-making prepared by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. In view of its mandate to "make such proposals and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties as it considers necessary for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention" (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.15, para. 2 (d)), at its sixteenth meeting (Geneva, 19–21 June 2013), the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention requested the Bureau to prepare a draft decision on public participation in decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/2, para. 14) for its consideration, revision and approval and subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties.

The draft decision was prepared on the basis of Meeting of the Parties decision EMP.II/1 on the same subject matter, the outcome of the work undertaken by the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making in the current intersessional period and the note by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (AC/WGP-16/Inf.2) submitted to the sixteenth meeting of the Working Group. The document was subsequently distributed for consultation to Parties and stakeholders. The Bureau considered the comments received and prepared the present, revised version of the document for further consideration and approval by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 February 2014).

At its seventeenth meeting, the Working Group revised and approved, as amended at

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the meeting, the draft decision on public participation in decision-making (AC/WGP-17/CRP.2)[1] and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

[1] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp17.html.

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling the provisions of articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and the provisions of article 6 bis of the amendment to the Convention on public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms,

Further recalling its decisions EMP.II/1 on public participation in decision-making, decision V/5 on the strategic plan for 2015–2020 and V/6 on the work programme for 2015–2017,

Mindful that the 2011 cycle of national implementation reports, the findings of the Compliance Committee and the work carried out under the auspices of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making to date have collectively shown that challenges remain to the full implementation of the second pillar of the Convention across the region,

Recognizing the vital role played by the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making in bringing together experts from governments, civil society and other stakeholders to exchange experiences regarding those challenges and to explore possible good practices to address them,

Welcoming the important contribution to furthering the implementation of the second pillar played by organizations engaged in capacity-building at the national and subregional levels,

Welcoming also the work of Aarhus Centres in several countries as platforms to facilitate public participation by providing environmental information, raising public awareness, promoting participatory debate on environmental policies, programmes and projects and providing assistance to members of the public in exercising their rights,

Underlining the need to further the implementation of the second pillar of the Convention (articles 6, 7 and 8, and eventually 6 bis) so as to provide for more effective public participation in decision-making in environmental matters,

1. *Notes* with appreciation the work undertaken by the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making and expresses its gratitude to Ireland for its leadership of the Task Force;

2. *Takes note* of the Maastricht recommendations on promoting effective public participation in decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/2014/8) developed under the auspices of the Task Force, and invites Parties, Signatories, other interested States and stakeholders to use them as a guidance to improve implementation of the second pillar of the Convention;

3. *Welcomes* initiatives taken by Parties, Signatories, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and other stakeholders to study good practices, examine practical means of promoting more effective public participation in environmental decision-making and share their findings and experience, and encourages further activities to this end;

4. *Requests* the secretariat to make information on such activities as widely accessible as possible through the Aarhus Good Practice database and other online tools;

5. *Invites* Parties, Signatories, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to strengthen implementation of the public participation pillar of the Convention at the national level and where possible to make resources available for this purpose;

6. *Invites* organizations engaged in capacity-building to consider developing training programmes at the national and subregional levels for public officials involved in the day-to-day task of carrying out public participation procedures covered by articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention;

7. *Invites* researchers focusing on participatory processes and environmental decision-making to use the resources gathered under the auspices of the Task Force in their research, and also to share the results of their research with the Task Force;

8. *Encourages* Parties, Signatories, other interested States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and other stakeholders to participate in the activities under the Convention on public participation in decision-making and to allocate sufficient resources for this matter;

9. *Decides* to extend in time the mandate of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making, under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention, to carry out further work, taking into consideration the relevant work being undertaken by Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders;

10. *Welcomes* the offer of [.....] to [continue to] lead the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making;

11. *Requests* the Task Force, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake the following tasks:

(a) Continue working to strengthen the implementation of the public participation provisions of the Convention;

(b) Continue working to identify the main obstacles to effective public participation in all types of decision-making within the scope of articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention at the national, provincial and local levels, including barriers to participation for non-governmental organizations, the general public and marginalized groups, and taking into account, inter alia, the national implementation reports, the findings of the Compliance Committee, other relevant assessments and the experiences of the public;

(c) Continue working to exchange good practices to address the main obstacles to the full implementation of the second pillar of the Convention, including, inter alia, the different types of "decisions" and "decision-making" covered by the Convention and the implications for public participation of different decision-making methods, also through the gathering of experiences from Parties and stakeholders regarding the application of the Maastricht recommendations on promoting effective public participation in decision-making;

(d) Continue working to identify innovative practices that facilitate more effective public participation without entailing additional significant financial or human resources on the part of public authorities;

(e) Continue to oversee the collection and dissemination of good practices in public participation in decision-making through the Aarhus Good Practice online database;

(f) While taking care to allow sufficient time to address the implementation of articles 6, 7 and 8 generally, investigate possibilities for focusing in greater depth on collaboration with relevant partner organizations, as appropriate, on implementation of the Convention's public participation requirements in decision-making in those fields of activity considered to be of particularly high priority at the current time, for example, decision-making for sustainable development; climate-change related decision-making; [the nuclear domain, energy-related planning and policymaking; and the extractive sector;] [and, if resources allow, decision-making on chemicals; food and agriculture; emerging technologies (e.g., nanotechnology) and product-related decision-making;]

(g) Assess the Convention's provisions on public participation in decision-making having a significant impact on the environment, encompassing, inter alia, sustainable development, and consider options for a possible follow-up identified through the assessment.

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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Fifth session
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June and 1 July 2014
Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda
Substantive matters: access to justice

Draft decision V/3 on promoting effective access to justice

Summary

The present document sets out a draft decision on promoting effective access to justice prepared by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. In view of its mandate to "make such proposals and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties as it considers necessary for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention" (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.15, para. 2 (d)), at its sixteenth meeting (Geneva, 19–21 June 2013), the Working Group of the Parties requested the Bureau to prepare a draft decision on effective access to justice for its consideration, revision and approval and for subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/2, para. 16).

The document was prepared on the basis of decision IV/2 on the same subject, the outcome of the work undertaken by the Task Force on Access to Justice in the current intersessional period and the note by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice (AC/WGP-16/Inf.3) submitted to the Working Group's sixteenth meeting.

The document was subsequently distributed to Parties and stakeholders for consultation. The Bureau considered the comments received and prepared the present, revised version of the document for further consideration and approval by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 February 2014).

At its seventeenth meeting, the Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the draft decision on promoting effective access to justice (AC/WGP-17/CRP.3)[1] and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

[1] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp17.html.

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The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling the provisions of article 9 of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters,

Also recalling the eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs of the Convention,

Further recalling its decisions I/5, II/2, III/3 and IV/2 on promoting effective access to justice,

Noting the relevant objectives of the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 as adopted through decision V/5, and the relevant sections of the Work Programme for 2015–2017 as adopted through decision V/6,

Having reviewed the reports of the Task Force on Access to Justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2012/5; ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/5; ECE/MP.PP/2014/5),

1. *Recognizes* the challenges faced by Parties in implementing the third pillar of the Convention (article 9), and the need for further considerable efforts to achieve effective access to justice;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the work undertaken by the Task Force on Access to Justice;

3. *Expresses its gratitude* to Sweden for its leadership of the Task Force;

4. *Welcomes* capacity-building initiatives by Parties, Signatories and international organizations and other stakeholders aimed at promoting more effective implementation of article 9 of the Convention and encourages them, as appropriate, to undertake such initiatives in the next intersessional period;

5. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders for contributing material to the online jurisprudence database concerning the Convention, and encourages Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders, including judges, legal professionals and academics, to use and promote the database and to further contribute to its expansion and improvement;

6. *Encourages* Governments to provide the public with information on access to administrative and judicial review procedures, including through electronic information tools, to ensure public access to relevant decisions of courts and other bodies, and to share their experiences in implementing e-justice initiatives;[2]

7. *Stresses* the significant role of national and international associations of judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals, and in particular of judicial training institutions, as well as the substantial role of public interest lawyers and non-governmental organizations, with regard to information exchange and capacity-building, and invites Governments to support their activities

8. *Encourages* Governments to stimulate a multi-stakeholder dialogue aiming at removing as the case may be, barriers to access to justice, involving the different ministries and agencies responsible, inter alia, for national policies on environment, justice, education, the judiciary, constitutional courts, ombudsmen, bar associations, public interest lawyers and non-governmental organizations, and to share these experiences within the activities of the Task Force;

9. *Encourages* Parties to integrate to the extent possible the issue of access to justice in environmental matters into the curriculum of law faculties, public administration

[2] E-justice initiatives include the use of information and communication technologies to improve public access to justice and other types of activities involving the resolution of disputes.

and judicial training institutions and other relevant institutions supporting the implementation of the Convention;

10. *Invites* Parties, Signatories and international and national organizations to cooperate and avoid duplication of activities in information exchange, the organization of training events and other capacity-building activities for the judiciary and other legal professionals at the national and international levels;

11. *Decides* to extend in time the mandate of the Task Force on Access to Justice, under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention, to carry out further work in relation to the implementation of the Convention, taking into consideration the relevant activities being undertaken by Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders;

12. *Welcomes* the offer of [Sweden] to [continue to] [lead] the work of the Task Force;

13. *Requests* the Task Force, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake the following work:

(a) To promote the exchange of information, experiences, challenges and good practices relating to the implementation of the third pillar of the Convention, on such issues as costs, remedies, scope of review, timeliness, protection against persecution and harassment;

(b) To identify priority needs with respect to public access to justice in environmental matters, to take stock of capacity-building initiatives taking place in the region and beyond, and to promote the involvement of associations of judges, public interest lawyers and other legal professionals in these initiatives;

(c) As resources allow, to prepare analytical, guidance and training materials to support the work in the above subparagraphs (a) and (b);

(d) To promote understanding and the use of relevant findings of the Compliance Committee of a systemic nature;

14. *Entrusts* the secretariat, subject to availability of resources, to undertake the following work:

(a) To participate in, plan and implement, as appropriate, capacity-building activities, including workshops and trainings related to access to justice, to be organized in cooperation with relevant partner organizations;

(b) To expand, in cooperation with the Task Force, the web portal for the exchange of jurisprudence concerning the Convention;

15. *Invites* the Parties, Signatories and international and other organizations to participate in the Convention's activities on access to justice, and to allocate funds for this matter;

16. *Requests* the Parties, Signatories and other interested States to facilitate the involvement in relevant activities under the Convention of representatives of ministries of justice, the judiciary, judicial training institutions and other organizations having a strong profile in access to justice issues.

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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Fifth session
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June and 1 July 2014
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda
Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages: promotion of the Convention's principles in international forums

Draft decision V/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Summary

The present document, prepared by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, sets out a draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums. In view of its mandate to "make such proposals and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties as it considers necessary for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention" (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.15, para. 2 (d)), at its sixteenth meeting (Geneva, 19–21 June 2013), the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention requested the Bureau to prepare a draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums for its consideration, revision and approval and for subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/2, para. 5 (c)).

The document was prepared on the basis of decision IV/3 on the same subject, the outcome of the work undertaken under the auspices of the Working Group on this work area in the current intersessional period and the note by the Chair of the thematic session on public participation in international forums (AC/WGP-16/Inf.5) submitted to the sixteenth meeting of the Working Group.

The document was subsequently distributed to Parties and stakeholders for consultation. The Bureau reviewed the document at its thirty-second meeting (Geneva, 2–3 December 2013) and submitted the draft decision for further consideration and approval by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 February 2014).

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At its seventeenth meeting the Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-17/CRP.4)[1] and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

[1] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp17.html.

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention),

Recalling also its decisions II/4, III/4 and IV/3 on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums, decision V/5 on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 and decision V/6 on the Work Programme for 2015–2017,

Mindful of the importance of increasing understanding of the challenges faced and the good practices employed by international forums with respect to public participation, through further sharing experience gained under the Convention with international forums,

Welcoming the increasing number of requests from interested international forums seeking expert assistance from the secretariat and Parties on this topic,

Acknowledging the progress made by Parties, international organizations, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders in promoting the application of the Convention's principles,

Recognizing that expert assistance is an important powerful tool for the promoting the principles of the Convention and sharing the considerable experience accumulated under the Aarhus Convention in an efficient and direct manner,

Also recognizing the valuable work that has been done to implement article 3, paragraph 7, while acknowledging the considerable challenges still to be addressed to fully implement this provision,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the work undertaken under the auspices of the Working Group of the Parties, which has provided a true multi-stakeholder platform for effectively addressing a number of important issues;

2. *Expresses its gratitude* to France for its ongoing leadership of this work area;

3. *Reiterates* its commitment to continue to apply the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (Almaty Guidelines) (contained in decision II/4) within the activities and subsidiary bodies established under the Convention;

4. *Decides* to continue the work on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties;

5. *Requests* each Party to:

(a) Further actions to promote public participation at the national level regarding international environmental decision-making processes and take appropriate actions within the framework of international organizations in matters relating to the environment, bearing in mind relevant provisions of the Almaty Guidelines;

(b) Interact within and between its ministries to inform officials involved in other relevant international forums about article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention and the Almaty Guidelines;

(c) Consider innovative ways to improve its own public's access to information and participation in international forums and share their experience with other Parties;

(d) Continue, either individually or in collaboration with other Parties, Signatories or like-minded Governments, to promote the principles of the Convention in the procedures of other international forums and in the work programmes, projects, decisions, instruments and other substantive outputs of those forums whose practices do not presently reflect the Guidelines or the principles of the Convention;

(e) Consider providing expert assistance to other interested Parties, Signatories or Governments on possible good practices to facilitate the public to participate more effectively in international forums, including when hosting important international events;

6. *Requests* the Working Group of the Parties:

(a) To convene regularly, on a needs basis, a thematic session on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums as an item on the agenda of its meetings with a view to providing opportunities for Parties, Signatories and stakeholders to exchange experiences in the context of promoting the application of the principles of the Convention with respect to those international forums within the definition of paragraph 4 of the Almaty Guidelines identified by Parties or stakeholders to be of particular priority;

(b) If it considers that one or more specific issues merit more in-depth consideration, to convene, on an ad hoc basis, a workshop or other event on that theme, and/or mandate a consultant or group of experts to examine the subject matter and to report on their findings to the Working Group of the Parties;

(c) To oversee the collection and dissemination of good practices and innovative initiatives to promote the principles of the Convention through the Aarhus Good Practice online database;

(d) Subject to available resources, undertake a global review of the state of the art with respect to participatory tools and mechanisms for consulting the public on international decision-making and to share the outcomes of the review with Parties, stakeholders and interested international forums;

7. *Requests* the secretariat to provide upon request expert assistance, including, as appropriate, commenting on draft documents and expert participation at meetings or events organized by international forums, training sessions, workshops, learning centres or other platforms:

(a) To interested international forums seeking to make their processes more transparent and participatory;

(b) To individual Parties wishing to put in place tools or mechanisms to assist the public to participate more effectively in international forums, including when hosting an important conference of any international forum;

8. *Invites* Parties, Signatories, international and other organizations to [continue supporting the implementation of article 3, paragraph 7 of the Convention] [allocate sufficient funds:

(a) At the national level, to support the participation of the public before, during and in the follow-up to meetings and events of international forums;

(b) At the international level, to support international forums to promote more effective public participation in their projects, processes and policies;

(c) To the Convention's work programme, to support its activities on this topic, including the secretariat's expert assistance and capacity-building work, in order that it may respond usefully to the expected ongoing demand;]

9. *Welcomes* the offer of [France] [to continue] to lead the work on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums.

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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Fifth session
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June and 1 July 2014
Item 7 (b) of the provisional agenda
Programme of work and operation of the Convention: Strategic Plan for 2015–2020

Draft decision V/5 on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020

Summary

At its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June–1 July 2011), the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) requested the Working Group of the Parties to develop a strategic plan for the Convention covering the period 2015–2020, to be ready for consideration and adoption at the fifth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties.[1]

The present document, prepared by the Bureau, sets out a draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 for the Aarhus Convention. As the key elements of the current Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.16, decision III/8)[2] appear to be still relevant, they were maintained, but the content was slightly updated. The introduction, vision and mission for the plan were drafted in the light of the Chisinau Declaration (see ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1),[3] adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session. To make the plan more reader-friendly, focal areas, strategic goals and means of implementation (tables) were merged into one section, "Framework for implementation". The content of the focal areas, strategic goals and objectives is identical to that of the current Strategic Plan 2009–2014, but the order of objectives was

[1] See ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1, decision IV/8; available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop4/mop4.doc.html.
[2] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop3/mop3.doc.html.
[3] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop4/mop4.doc.html.

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reconsidered. In addition: objective I.16 of the current Strategic Plan was removed and the subject matter is addressed in the section on mission and vision; objectives I.8 and II.2 of the current Strategic Plan were omitted, as they referred to establishing pollutant release and transfer registers and the entry into the force of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers; a new objective dedicated to the reporting mechanism was introduced; objective I.2 of the current Strategic Plan was merged with objective I.1; objective I.15 of the current Strategic Plan was deleted, but its substance is preserved in objective I.9; and the scope of former objective III.7 was extended to refer to all three pillars of the Convention and it is now objective III.2.

The framework for implementation was also further elaborated, through a clearer presentation of the distribution of responsibilities for national implementation and international cooperation and through the introduction of some indicators or targets, where feasible, so that progress in the implementation of the future strategic plan can be assessed. In addition, a section on roles and responsibilities was included to clarify the tasks of the different actors.

The previous version of the document (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/7)[4] was considered by the Working Group of the Parties at its sixteenth meeting (Geneva, 19–21 June 2013) and it was subsequently distributed for consultation to Parties and stakeholders.

In view of its mandate to "make such proposals and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties as it considers necessary for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention" (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.15, para. 2 (d)), at its sixteenth meeting, the Working Group of the Parties requested the Bureau to prepare an accompanying draft decision and to revise the draft strategic plan for the Working Group's consideration, revision and approval and for its subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration.

The Bureau considered the comments received and prepared the present, revised version of the document for further consideration and approval by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 February 2014).

At its seventeenth meeting, the Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 (AC/WGP-17/CRP.5)[5] and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

Contents

Page

Draft decision V/5 on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 3

Annex

Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 4

[4] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp16.html.

[5] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp17.html.

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling its decision IV/8 on strategic planning, through which it requested the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, with the assistance of the secretariat and the appropriate involvement of the public, to develop a strategic plan for the Convention covering the period 2015–2020, based on the experiences and results of the implementation of the current Strategic Plan 2009–2014, for consideration and adoption at the fifth Meeting of the Parties,

Welcoming the work undertaken by the Working Group of the Parties and the Bureau, under the leadership of the Chair, to develop a draft plan,

1. *Adopts* the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 as set out in the annex to this decision;

2. *Agrees* that the Plan will guide the implementation and further development of the Convention up until the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties;

3. *Also agrees* that a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 should be considered at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, focusing in particular on the progress indicators, which would facilitate the preparation of the next strategic plan.

Annex

Introduction

1. Environmental rights and democracy are essential elements of good governance and informed decision-making and a prerequisite for achieving the objective of sustainable development. Since the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992, and continuing through the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference), there has been a continued reinforcement of environmental democracy worldwide and progress in recognizing the economic benefits of sustainability, as well as the potential opportunities it presents for society as a whole. The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) strongly contributed to putting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration into practice and has proved an effective tool for promoting effective governance and green economy.

2. Through their ratification of the Convention, 46[6] countries from throughout Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as the European Union have committed themselves to ensure that they have in place adequate laws and practices relating to access to information, public participation and access to justice in the environmental field. Furthermore, initiatives have been taken by Parties to promote the Convention and its principles globally and to encourage interested non-Parties to participate in its activities.

3. Nonetheless, significant problems remain. The national implementation reports, coupled with the experience gathered through the work of the Convention's compliance mechanism and task forces, indicate that implementation of the access to justice provisions of the Convention appears to be the most difficult area for Parties. Although Parties report that they have elaborated legislation on most aspects relating to access to information and public participation, implementation of these provisions has also proven challenging in some countries.

4. The Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 set out in the present document gives priority to securing effective implementation by Parties, while recognizing the need to promote the lessons learned and the experience of Parties in all countries that wish to accede to the Convention or to replicate its achievements. Furthermore, it acknowledges the necessity of addressing new thematic challenges within its scope. The Strategic Plan also recognizes the cornerstone role of civil society in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development and the green economy. The document outlines the overall aspiration of Parties for 2020, while priorities for specific periods will be defined in greater detail in the respective work programmes and will take into account the financial resources available.

I. Vision and mission

5. Worldwide, social, economic and environmental challenges are becoming increasingly complex and interrelated. This fact should not, however, discourage the public from involvement in decision-making and Governments must provide the necessary stimulus, tools, information and assistance to enable transparent decision-making processes in order to ensure informed, balanced and effective public participation. Making decisions and decision-making processes fully accountable to the public whom they should serve

[6] To be updated in the light of possible new ratifications.

should become an essential, and not only procedural, matter. Furthermore, Governments should recognize that the Convention establishes the grounds for future developments and should endeavour to raise the accepted international standards in the future, based upon experience with higher standards on the domestic level.

6. The economic and social value of the environment and the environmental impacts of today's actions should be fully reflected in all decisions at the policy, strategic and project levels, particularly in the light of the increasing pressures put on resources by rapid global economic development and population growth. The social dimension of sustainable development is also closely linked to public participation in decision-making.

7. Our long-term mission is to minimize the depletion of environmental resources that should remain for future generations and to ensure sustainable and environmentally sound development through strengthening participatory environmental democracy in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region and beyond.

8. Our immediate mission is:

(a) As a first priority, to work towards full implementation of the Convention by each Party where this has not already been achieved and to encourage and support its use by the public;

(b) To increase the impact of the Convention by increasing the number of Parties within the ECE region and by encouraging States outside the region to accede to the Convention, replicate it or implement its principles, and by promoting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;

(c) To keep the provisions and principles of the Convention under constant review and consider forward-looking interpretations of the Convention and its further development so as to ensure that it continues responding to modern challenges and provides an adequate instrument to achieve its objectives.

9. This vision and mission are part of our broader aspiration to achieve a more equitable world and a better quality of life for all.

II. Roles and responsibilities

10. Parties should play a proactive role in promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Strategic Plan in their countries and in multilateral processes under the Convention. They should assess and regularly follow up its implementation at all levels of governance. In this context it should be understood that "Parties" includes all relevant public authorities at the national, subnational and local levels (responsible for, e.g., environment, justice, water, agriculture, transport, industry, health, education and foreign issues). Focal points could contribute, as appropriate, to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

11. Stakeholders, including the general public, civil society organizations, experts from the education and scientific sectors, the health sector, the private sector, industry, transport and agriculture, trade and labour unions, the mass media, various communities, indigenous peoples and international organizations, are encouraged to support implementation of the Strategic Plan. Civil society organizations promoting environmental protection have an important role in implementation by alerting the public to its rights and by supporting Governments in understanding and acting upon their obligations.

12. The secretariat facilitates implementation of the Strategic Plan through servicing the Convention's bodies, organizing regional and subregional capacity-building activities and undertaking advisory and promotion work.

III. Framework for implementation

A. Focal area I: Implementation

Strategic goal I
Full implementation of the Convention by each Party

To achieve full implementation of the Convention by each Party, Parties will implement the objectives set out below as far as possible.

Objective I.1: Each Party has a clear, transparent and consistent framework for the implementation of all provisions of the Convention, comprising not only the necessary constitutional, legislative and regulatory provisions, but also the operational procedures and mechanisms required for their practical application both in a national context as well as in transboundary situations, without discrimination as to citizenship, nationality or domicile.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identify and remediate any deficiencies in the implementation framework to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures, and institutional mechanisms are in place. All activities are to be implemented through a participatory process, such as a robust consultation in the preparation of the National Implementation Report (NIR).	Parties, partner organizations,[a] stakeholders	Adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures, and institutional mechanisms are in place. A participatory mechanism, such as a robust consultation in the preparation of the NIR, to monitor progress in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention is operational. Good quality and timely submitted NIRs. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International[b]		
Strengthen Parties' capacities to implement the Convention and address obstacles to its implementation through the compliance mechanism, sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies[c] Parties and the secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed). Effective implementation of decisions regarding Parties' non-compliance.

[a] Wherever reference is made to partner organizations, it is understood that the organizations participating in the Convention's capacity-building coordination framework and other relevant organizations will be involved.

[b] Refers to multilateral processes established under the Convention.

[c] Activities of the Meeting of the Parties and other bodies under the Convention also involve stakeholders.

Objective 1.2 (former 1.14):[7] The Convention's mechanism for compliance review fulfils the role of an effective instrument to address compliance problems that cannot be resolved at the national level. The findings and recommendations of the Compliance Committee are regarded by Parties as an authoritative source of advice on the implementation of the Convention and are used by them to improve their national practices in the best way possible.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Implement effectively the decisions regarding non-compliance by individual Parties adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. Having a system in place to monitor the implementation of decisions, involving all relevant authorities, communicants and other interested stakeholders.	Parties Interested stakeholders	Having a system in place for monitoring the implementation of decisions. Decisions of the Meeting of the Parties are implemented effectively and reported through NIRs Positive feedback from Parties and stakeholders
International		
Review of submissions, communications and referrals and preparation and publication of findings and recommendations. Thematic review of generic compliance problems. Periodic review of the implementation of decisions on compliance by individual Parties with the Convention adopted by the Meeting of the Parties.	Meeting of the Parties, Parties Compliance Committee Secretariat	Adoption of the findings and recommendations by the Compliance Committee and adoption of the respective decisions by the Meeting of the Parties. Positive feedback from Parties and stakeholders.

[7] Wherever reference is made to former objectives, see document decision III/8 on the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.16), available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop3/mop3.doc.html

Objective I.3 (new objective): The reporting mechanism under the Convention fulfils the role of an effective instrument to monitor the Convention's implementation

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Preparing national implementation report through wide multi-stakeholder consultations.	Parties Interested stakeholders	Good quality reports have been prepared through wide multi-stakeholder consultations.
International		
Review of the implementation.	Meeting of the Parties, Parties Compliance Committee Secretariat	Timely submission of good quality reports. Good quality synthesis report is drawn up with the major conclusions drawn from the submitted NIRs.

Objective I.4 (former I.3): In implementing the Convention, each Party not only complies with its mandatory provisions, but also endeavours to give effect to its provisions whose application is discretionary.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Develop adequate legislation, regulations and implement required measures. Pilot projects.	Parties Stakeholders	Adequate legislation and regulations are developed and the required measures are taken. Pilot projects are implemented. Positive feedback from Parties and stakeholders. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties, relevant Convention bodies and the secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective I.5 (former I.4): Environmental education is widely available and promotes active and responsible behaviour among the public as regards the environment, including the exercise of the rights guaranteed by the Convention.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Addressing provisions and principles of the Aarhus Convention through formal, informal and non-formal programmes on education for sustainable development (ESD).	Parties, Stakeholders, in particular educational institutions, local and subnational authorities Media Civil society organizations	Adequate educational programmes and curriculum. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Secretariat, mostly through implementation of the ECE Strategy for ESD[a] Partner organizations	The objective is adequately addressed through the work on the ECE Strategy for ESD and Convention bodies, as appropriate (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective I.6 (former I.5): Public authorities at all levels and in all relevant sectors of government are aware of the obligations under the Convention and allocate as far as possible the resources needed to comply with them.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Information, training, organizational and budgetary measures. Translate text of the Convention into national and subnational languages and distribute it widely; provide adequate training to all relevant staff of the authorities. Strengthening of national focal points. National capacity-building[a] activities.	Parties All public authorities concerned within Parties Stakeholders Partner organizations	The required information, training, organizational and budgetary measures are taken. National focal points have capacity to carry out the required work. Resources are allocated as far as possible. Convention is translated into national and subnational languages and distributed widely. Adequate training is provided regularly to relevant staff in the authorities.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
		Programmes for capacity-building activities are being implemented. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities. Strengthening Parties' capacities through sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Partner organizations and the secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed)

[a] Wherever reference is made to capacity-building activities, it is understood that the organizations participating in the Convention's capacity-building coordination framework will be involved.

Objective 1.7 (former 1.6): The implementation of the Convention leads to the development of an open administrative culture which supports public participation and transparency in environmental matters and values them as positive contributions to democratic, effective and good governance. Public officials concerned have and apply the knowledge and skills to provide assistance and guidance to the public to facilitate the exercise of its rights.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Political support at the highest level. Encourage proactive officials. Exchange of best practices and national capacity-building for officials at all levels. Regular awareness-raising. Establishing and implementing the operational procedures and mechanisms promoting an open administrative culture.	Parties All public authorities concerned within Parties Partner organizations	Programmes for capacity-building activities are being implemented. The operational procedures and mechanisms are established and implemented. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities. Sharing good practices.	Partner organizations and the secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared).

Objective 1.8 (former 1.12): Each Party provides for appropriate recognition of and support to civil society organizations promoting environmental protection as important actors in advancing democratic debate on environmental policies, raising public awareness and mobilizing and assisting citizens in exercising their rights under the Convention and contributing to its implementation.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identifying and remediating any deficiencies in the framework to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures, and institutional mechanisms are in place. National capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. Preparing and disseminating adequate resource material in national and subnational languages to assist civil society organizations in exercising their rights under the Convention. Provision of financial and expert assistance. Consideration of measures for the implementation of article 3, paragraph 8, such as "whistleblower" protection.	Parties Donor institutions Partner organizations Civil society organizations	Measures are implemented. Programmes for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities are implemented. Civil society organizations participate effectively in the related activities. Support for public interest environmental civil society organizations is being provided. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through sharing good practices.	Parties Donor institutions Partner organizations Civil society organizations Secretariat	Civil society organizations participate effectively in the activities at the international level. Good practices have been shared through regional and subregional capacity-building activities and the work of the Convention's bodies.

Objective 1.9 (former 1.13): Civil society organizations and the general public are aware of their rights under the Convention and assert them to effectively engage in addressing environmental and sustainable development issues and to advance both environmental protection and good governance, thus contributing to sustainable development.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Public awareness campaigns. Support for public interest environmental civil society organizations, including environmental law organizations.	Parties Civil society organizations Partner organizations Academic Institutions Donors	Measures for raising public awareness are being implemented. Support for public interest environmental civil society organizations is being provided. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Regional and subregional activities.	Parties Partner organizations Donors Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Secretariat	Civil society organizations and the general public have the opportunity to participate effectively in the activities under the Convention.

Access to information

Objective 1.10 (former 1.7): Public authorities at all levels and in all relevant sectors of government have well-established information policies and mechanisms, under which environmental information of a high quality is routinely provided and proactively disseminated to the public in a user-friendly manner, making full use of electronic tools where available.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Further development of systems to collect environmental information, including environment-related health information. Further development of public registers, national nodes and information centres.	Parties All stakeholders, including health professionals' organizations Partner organizations	Environmental information of a high quality is routinely provided and proactively disseminated to the public in a user-friendly manner. Good practices are reported through NIRs. Review mechanism on access to information.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
Increasing compatibility of electronic databases containing environmental information.		
Implementation of recommendations adopted through decision II/3 and implementation of other decisions of the Meeting of the Parties related to access to information.		
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).
Strengthening Parties' capacities through sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Secretariat	

Public participation

Objective I.11 (former I.9): Public participation procedures are regarded by public authorities and all other actors concerned as an integral part of the preparation of policies, plans, programmes, projects, legal instruments and executive regulations that may have a significant effect on the environment, and are implemented in their full scope. Prospective applicants are, where appropriate, encouraged to undertake proactive efforts to identify and inform the public concerned and enter into discussions with them at an early stage of planning, allowing for the effective participation of all interested members of the public.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Informational and organizational measures to facilitate public participation procedures.	All authorities within Parties responsible for carrying out public participation procedures	Measures have been taken to ensure that effective public participation procedures are in place.
Training and other capacity-building activities of officials and executives in communication with the general public.	Private sector Partner organizations	Good practices are reported through NIRs. Public authorities demonstrably take account of public input.
Application of recommendations developed under the Convention and		

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
other decisions of the Meeting of the Parties related to public participation. Decisions broadly reflect the public input.		
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through regional and subregional capacity-building activities, sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Partner organizations Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Access to Justice

Objective I.12 (former I.10):

(a) Each Party ensures access to administrative or judicial review procedures that can provide timely and effective remedies for members of the public who consider that their rights under the Convention have not been respected;

(b) Each Party empowers members of the publ. here they meet the criteria, if any, laid down in national law, to challenge acts and omissions that contravene provisions of national environmental law. Any such criteria should be established taking fully into account the Convention's objective of guaranteeing access to justice;

(c) Each Party undertakes genuine efforts to reduce and eliminate financial and other barriers that may prevent access to such review procedures and establishes, where appropriate, assistance mechanisms to that end.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identifying and remediating any deficiencies through a multi-stakeholder dialogue to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures and institutional frameworks are in place with regard to (a) remedies, (b) standing and (c) financial barriers. Capacity-building activities. Implementing decisions of the Meeting of the Parties related to access to justice.	Parties All authorities within Parties responsible for the functioning of administrative or judicial review procedures, in particular ministries of justice Civil society organizations Public interest lawyers Partner organizations	Effective access to administrative or judicial review procedures is ensured through: (a) providing timely and effective remedies to members of the public; (b) empowering members of the public to obtain access to justice; and (c) reducing and eliminating financial and other barriers that may prevent access to review procedures and through establishing assistance mechanisms.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
		Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through regional and subregional capacity-building activities, sharing good practices, maintaining jurisprudence database and developing guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Partner organizations Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective 1.13 (former 1.11): Judges, public prosecutors and other legal professionals are familiar with the provisions of the Convention and are ready to exercise their respective responsibilities to uphold them.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Information, education/training and capacity-building measures for legal professionals in accordance with decisions on access to justice adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. Taking measures to make decisions of courts, and whenever possible of other judicial bodies, publicly accessible.	Parties, in particular, ministries of justice or similar national bodies Judicial training centres Law schools Professional organizations Civil society organizations	Adequate curricula/training programmes. Measures are being implemented. Decisions of courts, and whenever possible of other judicial bodies, are publicly accessible. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities through regional and subregional capacity-building activities, maintaining jurisprudence database, sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Partner organizations Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

B. Focal area II: Expansion

Strategic goal iI
Increase the impact of the Convention in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region and beyond

To increase the impact of the Convention in the ECE region and beyond, Parties will implement the following objectives as far as possible:

Objective II.1: The number of Parties to the Convention within the ECE region continues to increase steadily throughout the plan period.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Build public and political support for ratification in non-Parties. Bilateral consultations to discuss and overcome obstacles to ratification.	Parties Partner organizations Civil society organizations Interested non-Party within the ECE region	Completed ratification procedures.
International		
Strengthen Parties' capacities through capacity-building activities, sharing good practices, developing guidance material and providing assistance upon request.	Secretariat Civil society organizations Parties Interested non-Party Partner organizations	Increased number of Parties.

Objective II.2 (former II.3): The amendment to the Convention on public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and the placing on the market of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is approved by a sufficient number of Parties to enter into force by 2015 and is progressively implemented.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Build public and political support for ratification in Parties. Parties seek bilateral consultations with other Parties that have ratified the amendment, to discuss and overcome obstacles to ratification and receive/provide capacity-building assistance and share good practices.	Interested Parties Partner organizations Civil society organizations	Completed ratification procedures. Good practices are reported through NIRs.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
International		
Strengthening the capacities of the Parties concerned through capacity-building activities, sharing good practices and provision of advisory assistance upon request. Use of regional and international cooperation arrangements to raise interest in the GMO amendment.	Secretariat Civil society organizations Parties concerned Partner organizations, in particular the secretariat of the Cartagena Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity.	Increased number of ratifications.

Objective II.3 (former II.4): States in other regions of the world effectively exercise their right to accede to the Convention. Parties actively encourage accession to the Convention by States of other regions of the world.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Build public and political support for ratification in non-Parties. Bilateral consultations between Parties and non-Parties to discuss and overcome obstacles to ratification, provide capacity-building assistance and share good practices with interested non-Parties.	Parties Partner organizations Civil society organizations Interested non-Party outside the ECE region	Completed ratification procedures. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening the capacities of interested non-Parties through capacity-building activities, sharing good practices, translating guidance material into national and subnational languages and providing advisory and technical assistance upon request. Use of regional and international cooperation arrangements to raise interest in the Convention.	Secretariat Civil society organizations Parties Interested non-Party outside the ECE region	Increased number of Parties.

Objective II.4 (former II.5): The Convention sets an internationally recognized standard for access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, and inspires the development of similar instruments in other regions of the world thereby putting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration into practice.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Promoting the Convention: (a) at national level to national focal points dealing with other international forums; and (b) through bilateral cooperation with countries in other regions through providing capacity-building assistance and sharing good practices.	Parties Partner organizations Civil society organizations	Convention promoted effectively within interministerial processes and through Parties' positions in major international forums, as well as among countries in other regions. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Participation in key regional and international events to publicize the Convention. Encouraging references to the Convention in other forums (political and academic). Cooperating with other regional bodies interested in the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. Providing capacity-building and advisory assistance.	Parties Meeting of the Parties and its Bureau and the Working Group Secretariat Civil society organizations Partner organizations	Convention promoted effectively in major international forums and among countries in other regions.

Objective II.5 (former II.6): The Parties to the Convention actively promote the application of its principles in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organizations relating to the environment, and endeavour to influence the practices of international forums in matters relating to the environment, in particular the development and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Consideration of possible measures to give effect to the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus	Parties Partner organizations Civil society organizations	Increased number of international forums that apply the Almaty Guidelines in their procedures.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
Convention in International Forums at the national level. Implementation of the decisions of the Meeting of the Parties related to application of the Convention's principles in international environmental decision-making.		National coordination mechanisms are in place and are working effectively. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities to apply the Almaty Guidelines. Promotion of the application of the Almaty Guidelines in international forums. Adoption of appropriate practices and procedures in international forums; review of existing practices. Consultations with other forums.	Parties Secretariat Civil society organizations Partner organizations Meeting of the Parties and its Working Group	Application of the Convention's principles is promoted effectively in major international forums. The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies. Parties coordinate collectively in other forums on matters relevant to the application of the Convention's principles.

Objective II.6 (former II.7): The Parties to the Convention, both in their participation in international policymaking and in their national implementation activities, achieve synergies between the Convention and other international environmental and human rights agreements.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Coordinated implementation of the Convention and the provisions on access to information and public participation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).	Parties	Synergies between the implementation of the Convention and other international environmental and human rights agreements are ensured. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Organization of joint activities with other MEAs, in particular those of ECE, and human rights bodies.	Parties Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies	Joint activities with other MEAs and human rights bodies are implemented effectively.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
	Secretariat Civil society organizations Partner organizations	Parties coordinate collectively in other forums on matters relevant to the application of the Convention.

C. Focal area III: Development

Strategic goal III
Further development of the provisions and principles of the Convention where necessary to ensure that it continues to achieve its objectives

To achieve the further development of the provisions and principles of the Convention where necessary to ensure that it continues to achieve its objectives, Parties will endeavour to implement the following objectives:

Objective III.1: The provisions of the Convention are interpreted in a dynamic way, enabling practice to adapt to experience acquired in the course of implementation, new developments in society, technological innovation and new environmental challenges.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Forward-looking interpretation of the Convention in view of new environmental and development challenges.	Parties Civil society organizations Private sector	Adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures, and institutional frameworks are in place. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Strengthening Parties' capacities and addressing obstacles in implementing the Convention through the compliance mechanism, sharing good practices and developing guidance material.	Parties Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective III.2 (former III.7): The Parties explore possibilities for the development of measures under the Convention to ensure greater opportunities for public participation in policy formulation and implementation concerning each of the three pillars of the Convention, so as to contribute to sustainable development, recalling the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the related Plan of Implementation and the Rio+20 Declaration. Furthermore, the Parties share their experiences in implementing the Convention with other forums interested in using them as a basis or a source of inspiration for further strengthening participatory democracy in their respective fields.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Use of participatory procedures in the revision and/or development of national strategies for sustainable development and for the development of sustainable development goals.	Parties	Provisions for effective public participation are implemented. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Exchange of experience and best practices on the impact of instruments of participatory democracy on decisions related to all dimensions of sustainable development, public participation in policy formulation and implementation contributing to sustainable development.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Parties Secretariat Civil society organizations Partner organizations	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Access to information

Objective III.3: The range of environmental information that is made available to the public is gradually widened, inter alia, by developing and implementing mechanisms enabling more informed consumer choices as regards products, thereby contributing to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Through exchange of information and good practice, consideration is given as to how to promote the increasing accessibility of environmental information held by the private sector, taking into account relevant issues of confidentiality of commercial and industrial information and protection of intellectual property rights, in line with the current approach under the Convention.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identify and remediate through a participatory intersectoral and multi-	Parties Civil society organizations	Environmental information, including related to products is made available effectively.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
stakeholder process any deficiencies in the national framework to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures and institutional frameworks are in place. Capacity-building activities.	Private sector Partner organizations	Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities, exchange of information and best practice in promoting the accessibility of environmental information held by the private sector based on national experience, preparing studies and guidance material.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Civil society organizations Private sector Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant studies and guidance material has been developed).

Public Participation

Objective III.4: The provisions on public participation in decisions having a significant impact on the environment, encompassing, inter alia, product-related decision-making, are assessed, further reflected on and, where appropriate, elaborated upon.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identify and remediate through a participatory intersectoral and multi-stakeholder process any deficiencies in the national framework to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures and institutional frameworks are in place. Application of recommendations developed under the Convention with regard to relevant provisions on public participation. Capacity-building activities.	Parties Civil society organizations Private sector	Measures are taken. Provisions for effective public participation are implemented. Capacity-building activities are implemented. Good practices are reported through NIRs.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities, exchange of information and promotion of good practice with regard to the implementation of the provisions on public participation in decisions having a significant impact on the environment.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Civil society organizations Partner sector Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective III.5: The provisions of the Convention relating to public participation in the preparation of plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment, as well as executive regulations and other generally applicable legally binding normative instruments that may have a significant effect on the environment, are applied, kept under review and, as appropriate, further developed to enhance public participation from an early stage in strategic decision-making processes. This should be done with appropriate public involvement and taking fully into account the specific nature and constraints of such processes and related obligations under other MEAs, in particular the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA) to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), and by involving its bodies in such processes.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Identify and remediate through a participatory intersectoral and multi-stakeholder process any deficiencies in the national framework to ensure that adequate legislative, regulatory and policy measures and institutional frameworks are in place. Application of the recommendations developed under the Convention with regard to relevant provisions on public participation. Capacity-building activities.	Parties	Measures are taken. Provisions for effective public participation are implemented. Capacity-building activities are implemented. Good practices are reported through NIRs.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities, exchange of information and promotion of good practice with regard to implementation of the provisions of articles 7 and 8 of Convention and in context of the implementation of the SEA Protocol.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Parties Civil society organizations Partner organizations Espoo Convention/ Protocol on SEA bodies Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Objective III.6: To enhance the effectiveness of public participation, the development and application of innovative forms and tools of public participation beyond traditional consultation procedures are encouraged, the development of the capacity of civil society organizations is supported and civil society is strengthened.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Promote good practices regarding different modes of public participation.	Parties Civil society organizations Partner organizations	Innovative and effective forms and tools of public participation are in place. Capacity of civil society organizations and civil society is strengthened. Good practices are reported through NIRs.
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities, exchange of information and promotion of good practice on innovative and effective forms of and tools for participation.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Parties Civil society organizations Partner organizations Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

Access to Justice

Objective III. 7 (former III.6): Work on promoting effective access to justice continues, in particular by way of further information exchange, capacity-building and exchange of good practice, inter alia, on the issue of adequate and effective remedies, taking fully into account the Convention's objective of, inter alia, guaranteeing access to justice. The extension of the range of members of the public having access to administrative and judicial procedures is explored, with particular focus on access by environmental civil society organizations. Further steps are taken to remove or reduce financial and other barriers and to establish assistance mechanisms where appropriate.

Indicative types of activity/measure	*Possible implementing partners*	*Indicators of progress/targets*
National		
Review of implementation of article 9, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, through a multi-stakeholder dialogue to identify gaps and obstacles to implementation.	Parties Civil society organizations	Adequate measures are implemented.
Reducing or removing financial and other barriers and provision of assistance mechanisms where appropriate.		
International		
Regional and subregional capacity-building activities, exchange of information and promotion of good practice with regard to implementation of the provisions of article 9.	Meeting of the Parties and relevant Convention bodies Parties Civil society organizations Partner organizations Secretariat	The objective is adequately addressed through the work of the respective Convention bodies and through regional and subregional capacity-building activities (e.g., good practices have been shared and relevant guidance material has been developed).

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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Fifth session
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June and 1 July 2014
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda
Programme of work and operation of the Convention: Work programme for 2015–2017

Draft decision V/6 on the work programme for 2015–2017 for the Convention

Summary

At its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June–1 July 2011), the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters tasked the Working Group of the Parties and the Bureau with the preparation of substantive documents for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties, including the drafting of the future work programme (see ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1, decision IV/6, annex I, item X).

In accordance with that mandate, the present document sets out a draft decision on the work programme for 2015–2017 for the Convention. A preliminary draft of the document was prepared by the Bureau in line with the comments received on the draft elements of the work programme for 2015–2017 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/12),[1] when it was reviewed at the sixteenth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 19–21 June 2013), as well as the comments received thereafter by the secretariat. The draft document was subsequently distributed for further consultation to Parties and stakeholders. The Bureau then considered all the comments received, and prepared a revised version of the draft decision, which it resubmitted for the Working Group's further consideration, revision and approval at its seventeenth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 February 2014).

At its seventeenth meeting, the Working Group further revised and approved, as

[1] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp16.html.

amended at the meeting, the draft decision on the work programme for 2015–2017 (AC/WGP.17/CRP.6),[2] and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

Contents

		Page
	Draft decision V/6 on the work programme for 2015–2017	3
Annexes		
I.	Draft work programme for 2015–2017	5
II.	Estimated costs of activities of the work areas proposed in the work programme for 2015–2017	12
III.	Overview of extrabudgetary staff needs to be covered from the Convention trust fund	17

[2] Available from http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp17.html.

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling its decision I/11 on the procedures for the preparation, adoption and monitoring of work programmes,

Taking into account the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 for the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) adopted through decision V/5, and the scheme of financial arrangements adopted through decision V/7,

1. *Adopts* the work programme for 2015–2017, containing the estimated costs of each activity, as set out in annex I to this decision;

2. *Agrees* upon the indicative allocation of resources and the resulting estimated costs set out in annexes I and II, subject to annual review and, as appropriate, revision by the Working Group of the Parties on the basis of annual reports provided by the secretariat pursuant to decision V/7 on financial arrangements;

3. *Encourages* Parties to endeavour to ensure that the funding of the activities of the work programme remains stable throughout the period 2015–2017;

4. *Also encourages* Parties, insofar as possible, and subject to the internal budgetary procedures of the Parties, to contribute to the Convention's trust fund for a given calendar year by 1 October of the preceding year, so as to secure staff costs for the smooth functioning of the secretariat, as a priority, and the timely and effective implementation of the priority activities of the work programme for 2015–2017;

5. *Reiterates* its commitment to implementing the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Principles of the Convention in International Forums (Almaty Guidelines), through all the activities of the work programme, as relevant;

6. *Decides* to give general priority[3] to issues related to compliance and implementation, including capacity-building;

7. *Also decides* to give particular priority to the following substantive issues:

(a) Access to justice;

(b) Public participation;

(c) Access to information;

8. *Calls* on the Parties, and invites Signatories, other States and relevant intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, to contribute actively to the activities contained in the work programme;

9. *Requests* the secretariat, taking into consideration the results of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 and the work programme for 2015–2017, to prepare a draft work programme for the intersessional period following the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, including a detailed breakdown of estimated

[3] The primary function of the prioritization indicated in paragraphs 6 and 7, apart from explaining and reflecting the proposed allocation of resources in the annexes, is to provide guidance in situations in which there is a significant discrepancy between the actual income and the estimated financial requirement. If there is a significant shortfall in resources, then savings need to be made, and the prioritization provides guidance as to where those savings should be made. If there are surplus resources that are not earmarked, then the prioritization provides guidance as to how that surplus may be used. If the resources available closely match the estimated requirements set out in the annexes, the resources can simply be applied as indicated therein, i.e., there is no need for any further exercise of prioritization.

costs, for consideration and further elaboration by the Bureau and the Working Group of the Parties, at the latest three months before the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, with a view to possible adoption at that meeting;

10. *Further requests* the secretariat to ensure that an estimated costing for each draft decision finalized by the Working Group of the Parties during the intersessional period is properly reflected in the draft work programme for 2018–2020, in due time for the preparation of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, in order to enable Parties to better prioritize activities and allocate sufficient financial resources in the budget to take them forward.

Annex I

Draft work programme for 2015–2017

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
Substantive issues				
I. Access to information, including electronic information tools	Widen the range of environmental information made available to the public, including product information, and exchange of information and good practices, with a focus on several issues, including: (a) The distribution, quality and comparability of environmental information through the effective use of electronic information tools and sharing of good practice; (b) The further improvement of the implementation of the existing information obligations under the Convention; (c) The scope of environmental information, the provision of environmental information from different public authorities, associated costs, and the quality and comparability of the environmental information; (d) The application of the restrictions on access to environmental information in accordance with the Convention's provisions. Monitor implementation of the Recommendations on the More Effective Use of Electronic Information Tools to Provide Public Access to Environmental Information (ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.4, annex). Provide policy and guidance for the Aarhus Clearinghouse. Upgrade and use the Clearinghouse to facilitate the collection, dissemination and exchange of information related to the national implementation of the Convention and relevant global and regional developments on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Continue cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the European Environment Agency towards supporting a Shared Environment Information System. Monitor technical developments in information and	Task Force on Access to Information Secretariat, enlisting technical support as necessary	Task Force meetings and workshops; survey(s); participation in other relevant regional initiatives, as appropriate, through development of sector-based partnership approaches; pilot projects and capacity-building activities at the subregional and national level, which are expected to be funded by partners. Central management of the Aarhus Clearinghouse and promotion through online social media; provision of advice to and coordination of national and information nodes of the clearinghouse mechanism; information sharing and promotion of electronic tools through maintaining online databases for jurisprudence and national implementation reports, and maintaining online case studies on (a) public participation at the national level, and (b) public participation in international forums.	153 250

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
	communication technology.			
II. Public participation	Identify common difficulties and the main obstacles to effective public participation in all types of decision-making and at all levels (national, provincial, local) within the scope of articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention; and coordinate the collection and exchange of good practices to address the common difficulties and the main obstacles identified, including through the further development of the online compendium of case studies in public participation in decision-making. In order to inform the future work of the Task Force on Public Participation, review the application of the recommendations on public participation in decision-making, including through written surveys to Parties and stakeholders. In addition to considering public participation in environmental decision-making generally, focus on public participation in decision-making in such fields as decision-making for sustainable development; climate-change related decision-making, the nuclear domain; energy-related planning and policymaking, and the extractive sector; and if resources allow, decision-making on chemicals; food and agriculture; emerging technologies (e.g., nanotechnology) and product-related decision-making. Provide advisory assistance to partner organizations on training of public officials involved in the day-to-day task of carrying out public participation procedures covered by the Convention; provide a forum for sharing the results of researchers focusing on participatory processes and environmental decision-making; and assess, keep under review and explore further possibilities for development of the provisions of the Convention relating to public participation.	Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making Secretariat	Task Force meetings; workshops; collection of case studies; exploring synergies and possibilities for cooperation with relevant bodies under other multilateral environmental agreements and partner organizations. Participation in other relevant regional initiatives as appropriate; pilot projects and capacity-building activities at the subregional and national levels, which are expected to be funded by partners.[a]	133 160

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
III. Access to justice	Implementation of the decisions adopted at the fourth and fifth sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, as well as previous decisions, as appropriate; exchange of information, experiences, challenges and good practices relating to the implementation of the third pillar of the Convention, on such issues as costs, remedies, scope of review, timeliness, protection against persecution and harassment; identification of priority needs with respect to public access to justice in environmental matters; raising of awareness of the access to justice provisions of the Convention; and building of capacity among key groups of stakeholders, such as the judiciary, public interest lawyers and other legal professionals,[b] through organizing joint events with existing networks and other organizations. As resources allow, prepare analytical, guidance and training materials to support this work area.	Task Force on Access to Justice Secretariat, enlisting expert support as necessary	Task Force meetings, if feasible back to back with other relevant capacity-building events, to be organized in liaison with partner organizations active in access to justice, and through development of sector-based partnership approaches, where appropriate. Strengthen cooperation with existing networks of judges and other legal professionals, as well as other international forums, to exchange information and support capacity building. Develop analytical and training materials. Pilot projects and capacity-building activities at the subregional and national levels, which are expected to be funded by partners.	137 160
IV. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)	Support the implementation of decision II/1 on GMOs (GMO amendment) and relevant provisions of the Convention in this area, as well as the application of the Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with Respect to Genetically Modified Organisms (MP.PP/2003/3), inter alia, by promoting exchange of information on common difficulties and the main obstacles to their implementation, as well as good practices to address them.	Secretariat, in close cooperation with other stakeholders	Workshop(s); survey(s); advisory support to, and cooperation with, relevant bodies under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity; advisory support to countries upon request; and use of the Aarhus Clearinghouse to facilitate exchange of information on good practices.	36 923
Procedures and mechanisms				
V. Compliance mechanism	Monitor and facilitate the implementation of and compliance with the Convention. Increase support to individual Parties in following up on decisions on compliance	Compliance Committee Secretariat	Compliance Committee to review submissions, referrals and communications on cases of possible non-compliance, prepare decisions and reports and undertake fact-finding missions. Compliance Committee to explore possible synergies with other relevant forums. Secretariat to publicize the mechanism, manage the Committee's web page and develop a database of the Compliance Committee's findings.	289 410

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
VI. Capacity-building	Coordination of capacity-building activities to assist countries in the effective implementation of the Convention; implementation of capacity-building measures at the regional and subregional levels.	Secretariat, in close cooperation with other relevant stakeholders	Annual inter-agency coordination meetings; maintaining the Convention's web pages with information on capacity-building activities; use of the Aarhus Clearinghouse to facilitate exchange of information on good practices; training workshops and technical assistance, mostly separately funded under other substantive work areas; capacity-building activities at the national and subregional levels, which are expected to be funded by partners.	52 135
VII. Reporting mechanism	Production of national implementation reports and a synthesis report.	Secretariat, enlisting expert and administrative support as necessary Compliance Committee	Preparation and processing of national implementation reports. Analysis of reports and preparation of a synthesis report. Adjustment of guidance on reporting requirements, as needed.	10 000
Awareness-raising and promotion				
VIII. Awareness-raising and promotion of the Convention, including through: VIII.1. Communication Strategy VIII.2. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums VIII.3. Support to non-ECE States to accede to the Convention VIII.4. Support to regional and global initiatives on	Raise public awareness of the Convention throughout the ECE region and beyond; increase the number of Parties to the Convention; support regional and global initiatives on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. Activities should be carried out in synergy with the relevant activities of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs).	Secretariat Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties Working Group of the Parties	Participation in key regional and international events and processes; use of bilateral, regional and international cooperation arrangements to raise interest in the Convention, e.g., the European Neighbourhood Policy; feed into international processes that closely relate to the Convention, including, the special procedures under the United Nations Human Rights Council (depending on the mandate), the United Nations Environment Programme, the international financial institutions and other relevant international forums. Expert assistance to regional and global initiatives on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration; support to relevant events organized by others; missions and assistance to countries organized at the request of host Governments, with a focus on States that have expressed formal interest in becoming Parties to the Convention.	109 570

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration			Implementation of the Communication Strategy; website management; preparation of leaflets, publications, news bulletins, articles and other information materials.	
IX. Promotion of the Almaty Guidelines and other interlinkages with relevant international bodies and processes	Further the application of the principles of the Convention throughout all activities under the Convention, as appropriate, and in the context of the work of relevant international bodies and processes, inter alia, through the promotion of the Almaty Guidelines and the Recommendations on the More Effective Use of Electronic Information Tools to Provide Public Access to Environmental Information and monitoring of their implementation.	Secretariat Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties Working Group of the Parties	Thematic sessions, on a needs basis, at meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to oversee progress in promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums and to address challenges encountered in the implementation of article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention. Surveys regarding experiences gained in the implementation of article 3, paragraph 7, and the Almaty Guidelines; online networks; expert assistance to relevant international forums and to Parties upon request and developing a repository of good practices on establishing effective processes for the public to participate in international forums; joint activities with other treaties and multilateral processes; concrete actions by Parties at the national and international level to promote the principles of the Convention in international forums, and the Almaty Guidelines. Subject to resources, commissioning a study on how to make public participation in international forums more effective.	39 035
Coordination, horizontal support and Meeting of the Parties				
X. Coordination and oversight of intersessional activities	Coordination and oversight of the activities under the Convention. Preparation of substantive documents for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (e.g., drafting decisions, the future work programme, reviewing the implementation of the current work programme and the Strategic Plan).	Working Group of the Parties Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties	Working Group meetings, meetings of the Bureau and consultations among Bureau members electronically.	123 503
XI. Sixth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties	See article 10 of the Convention.	Meeting of the Parties	Session of the Meeting of the Parties.	—[c]

Work area	*Objective and expected outcome*	*Lead country, body or organization*	*Method of work*	*Average annual subtotal (US$)*
XII. Horizontal support areas	Overall support that covers multiple substantive areas of the work programme.	Secretariat	Secretarial support, staff training, equipment.	150 000
Total (including costs for all work areas and 13% programme support costs)				**1 394 586**

[a] Experts involved in the work of the Task Force will be invited to provide substantive support to the activities through commenting documents and participating in trainings, workshops, pilot projects etc. Meetings of the Task Force will provide a forum to discuss key outcomes of the activities and identify good practices and challenges in implementation.

[b] Experts involved in the work of the Task Force will be invited to provide substantive support to the activities through commenting documents and participating in trainings. Meetings of the Task Force will provide a forum to discuss key outcomes of the activities and identify good practices and challenges in implementation.

[c] Costs are reported under work area X.

Annex II

Estimated costs of activities of the work areas proposed in the work programme for 2015–2017

Work area	*Cost type*	*Description*	*Average estimated costs in US$ per year*[a]			
			2015	*2016*	*2017*	*2015–2017 annual average*
I. Access to information[b]	Staff time	Professional support, two P–3 staff: one at 30 per cent and one at 20 per cent of full-time equivalent (FTE)	90 450	90 450	90 450	90 450
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (e.g., upgrade and maintenance of Aarhus Clearinghouse and Aarhus good practice database)	15 000	15 000	15 000	15 000
	Travel, daily subsistence allowance (DSA) (experts/participants)	Travel of eligible participants (3 meetings)	40 800	40 800	40 800	40 800
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	7 000	7 000	7 000	7 000
Subtotal			**153 250**	**153 250**	**153 250**	**153 250**
II. Public participation	Staff time	Professional support, one P–3 staff at 40 per cent of FTE	72 360	72 360	72 360	72 360
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (e.g., preparation of the required materials)	13 000	13 000	13 000	13 000
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Travel of eligible participants (3 meetings)	40 800	40 800	40 800	40 800
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	7 000	7 000	7 000	7 000
Subtotal			**133 160**	**133 160**	**133 160**	**133 160**
III. Access to justice	Staff time	Professional support, two P–3 staff: one at 30 per cent and one at 10 per cent of FTE	72 360	72 360	72 360	72 360
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (e.g., preparation of the required materials)	17 000	17 000	17 000	17 000
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Travel of eligible participants (3 meetings)	40 800	40 800	40 800	40 800
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	7 000	7 000	7 000	7 000
Subtotal			**137 160**	**137 160**	**137 160**	**137 160**
IV. GMOs	Staff time	Professional support, two P–3 staff: each at 5 per cent of FTE	18 090	18 090	18 090	18 090
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (preparation of the required material)	4 000	4 000	4 000	4 000

Work area	*Cost type*	*Description*	*Average estimated costs in US$ per year*[a]			
			2015	*2016*	*2017*	*2015–2017 annual average*
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Eligible participants travel to event (e.g., workshop, round table)	—	34 000	—	11 333
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500
Subtotal			**25 590**	**59 590**	**25 590**	**36 923**
V. Compliance mechanism	Staff time	Professional support, three P-3 staff: one at 70 per cent and two at 10 per cent each of FTE	162 810	162 810	162 810	162 810
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (e.g., translation outside United Nations, preparation of the required material)	25 000	25 000	25 000	25 000
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Committee members, other participants (four Compliance Committee meetings per year)	91 800	91 800	91 800	91 800
	Travel, DSA (Staff)	Missions	9 800	9 800	9 800	9 800
Subtotal			**289 410**	**289 410**	**289 410**	**289 410**
VI. Capacity-building[d]	Staff time	Professional support, two P–3 staff: one at 10 per cent and one at 5 per cent of FTE	27 135	27 135	27 135	27 135
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (e.g., capacity-building activities, materials, studies)	7 000	7 000	7 000	7 000
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Eligible experts (e.g., annual meeting of capacity-building partners, capacity-building activities)	6 800	6 800	6 800	6 800
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	11 200	11 200	11 200	11 200
Subtotal			**52 135**	**52 135**	**52 135**	**52 135**
VII. Reporting mechanism	Subcontracts	Consultancy (processing of national implementation reports, preparation of the synthesis report)	—	10 000	20 000	10 000
Subtotal			—	**10 000**	**20 000**	**10 000**
VIII. Awareness-raising and promotion of the Convention	Staff time	Professional support, three P-3 staff: one at 20 per cent and two at 5 per cent each of FTE	54 270	54 270	54 270	54 270
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (publications, promotion materials)	14 000	14 000	14 000	14 000[e]
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Participation in events and country missions to promote the Convention	23 800	23 800	23 800	23 800

Work area	*Cost type*	*Description*	*Average estimated costs in US$ per year*[a]			
			2015	*2016*	*2017*	*2015–2017 annual average*
	Travel, DSA (Staff)	Participation at relevant events where no other funding is available	17 500	17 500	17 500	17 500
Subtotal			**109 570**	**109 570**	**109 570**	**109 570**
IX. Promotion of the Almaty Guidelines and other interlinkages with relevant international bodies and processes	Staff time	Professional support, one P-3 staff at 15 per cent of FTE	27 135	27 135	27 135	27 135
	Subcontracts	Consultancy (expert studies)	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000
	Travel, DSA (experts)	Expert missions	3 400	3 400	3 400	3 400
	Travel, DSA (staff)	Missions	3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500
Subtotal			**39 035**	**39 035**	**39 035**	**39 035**
X. Coordination and oversight of intersessional activities, including sixth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties	Staff time[f]	Professional support, three P-3 staff: one at 15 per cent; one at 10 per cent and one at 5 per cent of FTE	54 270	54 27	54 270	54 270
	Travel, DSA (experts/participants)	Eligible participants (meetings of Working Group of the Parties, Bureau, sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties)	47 600	47 600	102 000	65 733
	Travel, DSA ,staff)		3 500	3 500	3 500	3 500
Subtotal			**105 370**	**105 370**	**159 770**	**123 503**
XI. Sixth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties						[a]
XII. Horizontal support areas	Secretarial support (G–5)[h]	General support	140 000	140 000	140 000	140 000
	Technical support costs	Computers, equipment, external printing	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000
	Training of staff	Training activities to enhance staff skills	4 000	4 000	4 000	4 000
Subtotal			**150 000**	**150 000**	**150 000**	**150 000**

Work area	*Cost type*	*Description*	*Average estimated costs in US$ per year*[a]			
			2015	*2016*	*2017*	*2015–2017 annual average*
Total			**1 194 680**	**1 238 680**	**1 269 080**	**1 234 147**
Programme support costs (13%)			155 308	161 028	164 980	160 439
Grand total			**1 349 988**	**1 399 708**	**1 434 060**	**1 394 586**

[a] The estimated costs shown here are limited to those intended to be covered by voluntary contributions made under the Convention's scheme of financial arrangements, either through its trust fund or in kind. They do not include costs that are expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget or other sources. Figures are rounded up. They may change in accordance with the United Nations administrative regulations.

[b] Including responsibility for electronic information tools under the Convention and Protocol.

[c] Professional staff costs are estimated by multiplying expected staff time in each activity area by the projected annual salary costs of staff hired at the level indicated.

[d] This category of activities encompasses activities that build capacity in areas that relate to the Convention as a whole. Capacity-building activities relating to a specific topic under the Convention (e.g., electronic information tools, access to justice) are covered under those activity areas.

[e] In line with past practice, it is anticipated that some publications will be funded from the United Nations regular budget.

[f] Including provision of legal advice and general tasks.

[g] Costs are reported under work area X.

[h] This staff member would also support administrative activities under the reporting mechanism and other administrative tasks in relation to preparation for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. The extrabudgetary secretarial support will be required as of the last quarter of the year preceding the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. In the event that currently available staff funded by the 13 per cent programme support costs, levied from the trust funds of the ECE Environment Division, is discontinued, the secretarial support at the G–5 level will need to be increased to 100 per cent throughout the triennium, as shown in the table above.

Annex III

Overview of extrabudgetary staff needs to be covered from the Convention trust fund[a]

1. The following estimation of staff needs for the period 2015–2017 is based on the experience with regard to the implementation of the work programme for 2012–2014. The estimate aims to provide an overview of staff needs that reflects the reality of the requirements for implementation of the work programme as closely as possible. The information below is also shown in table format on the following page, for ease of reference.

(a) One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer[b]

2. One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer will be responsible for the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (70);[c] work on access to justice (10); awareness-raising and promotion (5); support to the main bodies under the Convention; and expert legal support to the secretariat (15).

(b) One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer[d]

3. One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer will be responsible for electronic information tools for the Convention and Protocol, the Aarhus Clearinghouse, PRTR.net and web content management (20); other responsibilities include servicing of all activities under the Protocol on PRTRs funded from the contributions earmarked for the Protocol (80).

(c) One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer[e]

4. One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer will be responsible for work on public participation in decision-making (40); GMOs (5); providing support to the Compliance Committee (10); the main bodies under the Convention (5); capacity-building (5); and

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[a] The secretariat is currently serviced by three staff members funded through the United Nations regular budget: one at the P-4 level, one at the P-2 level (recruited through National Competitive Examinations/young professionals programme) and one at 50 per cent at the G-5 level. One G-3 Programme Assistant is financed through the 13 per cent of programme support costs levied from the trust funds of the ECE Environment Division. Extension of the latter contract is subject to availability of the required amount from the programme support costs in the Convention's trust fund.

[b] This post is currently held by a P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer responsible for, inter alia, the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, work on access to justice and expert legal support to the secretariat.

[c] Figures contained in parentheses in this annex refer to the percentage of work time for each staff member, as compared with 100 per cent capacity for a full-time post.

[d] This post is currently held by a P-3 Environmental affairs Officer who performs tasks for both the Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs, and is responsible for, inter alia, the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, the PRTR Compliance Committee and the PRTR Bureau and Working Group of the Parties; PRTR.net and the Aarhus Clearinghouse; and electronic information tools, awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol.

[e] This post is currently vacant and temporarily occupied by a short-term P-2 Environmental Affairs Officer responsible for, inter alia, work on public participation in international forums; genetically modified organisms; the Aarhus Convention Implementation Guide and outreach.

outreach, awareness-raising and promotion of the Almaty Guidelines and other interlinkages with relevant international bodies and processes (35).

(d) One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer[1]

5. One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer will be responsible for work on access to information (30); access to justice (30); GMOs (5); providing support to the Compliance Committee (10); the main bodies under the Convention (10); capacity-building (10); and awareness-raising (5). In 2017 (or other year, if the date is changed) the staff member will also support organization of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, including coordination with the host country regarding logistics and finance, overseeing nominations/participation and credentials, and provide support in the preparation of meeting documentation.

(e) One G-5 Programme Assistant

6. During the last quarter of the year preceding the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (2017), an additional programme assistant could be hired to provide horizontal administrative support, including for the Working Group of the Parties, the Meeting of the Parties, the Bureau, the Compliance Committee and national reporting.

[1] This post is currently held by a P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer, responsible for, inter alia, work on access to information, access to justice; capacity-building; and support to the Compliance Committee.

Table of estimated extrabudgetary staff needs for 2015–2017

	Activities							
Post	*Access to information, including electronic information tools, Aarhus Clearinghouse and web management*	*Public participation in decision-making*	*Access to justice*	*GMOs*	*Compliance Committee*	*Capacity-building*	*Awareness-raising and promotion, including promotion of Almaty Guidelines and other interlinkages with relevant international bodies and processes*	*Working Group of the Parties, Meeting of the Parties, Bureau, legal advice and general tasks*
(a) P–3 full time	—	—	10	—	70	—	5	15
(b) P–3 part-time	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(c) P–3 full time	—	40	—	5	10	5	35	5
(d) P–3 full time	30	—	30	5	10	10	5	10
(e) G–5 full time	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	65

Note: Figures in the table refer to an aggregate estimated percentage of work time for each staff member for three years, as compared with 100 per cent for a full-time post.